

# Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Texas • Natural • Resource • Conservation • Commission

## FY 97 Water System Fee (Public Health Service Fee)

### What Is This Fee?

This fee is charged to recoup a portion of the costs of providing services to public water systems in the state. The services that are covered by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) include the following:

- (1) scheduling analysis of drinking water for chemical content;
- (2) collecting samples of drinking water for chemical analyses;
- (3) reviewing system data for evaluation of sampling waivers;
- (4) inspecting public water systems;
- (5) reviewing plans for new systems and major improvements to existing systems; and
- (6) providing technical assistance as needed.

The authorization for this fee is the Texas Water Code, Section 5.103, and the Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 341.041.

### How Is the Amount of This Fee Determined?

The amount of the fee charged to community and nontransient noncommunity water systems is calculated according to the following schedule:

Number of connections (C)\*

$$A \text{ Fee} = (C)^{0.65} @ \$9.50$$

Number of wells (W)

$$B \text{ Fee} = (W) @ \$40.00$$

Number of surface plants (S)

$$C \text{ Fee} = (S) @ \$400.00$$

$$\text{Total Fee}^{**} = A \text{ Fee} + B \text{ Fee} + C \text{ Fee}$$

\*The number of service connections will be determined from data collected from the latest inspection report of your water system. For all nontransient noncommunity systems, state, federal, and other community water system installations as designated by the TNRCC that serve large populations through a few connections, the number of connections for fee purposes is determined by dividing the population served by a value of 10. Examples of such installations are universities, children's homes, correctional facilities, etc., which generally do not bill customers for water service.

\*\*The minimum total fee will be \$75.00. This amount is charged to transient noncommunity water systems.

### Has There Been an Increase in the Fee Amount Charged This Year to Public Water Systems?

No. There was not a fee increase for this fiscal year. Prior to last year, there was an increase in the amount charged to public water systems because of significant increases in the federal monitoring requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act. As mandated by the Safe Drinking Water Act, additional inspection and sampling requirements are necessary.

### Don't We Pay for This when We Submit Monthly Samples to the Laboratory?

No. The samples submitted to the laboratory each month are for bacteriological testing. The laboratory charges a separate fee for processing bacteriological samples.

### Is This Fee New? If Not, Why Am I Being Billed for the First Time?

No. This fee is not new. Because of federal regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act that required a significant

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increase in regulatory involvement with public drinking water supplies, it was necessary to reconstruct the schedule used to calculate the fee. The fee structure was created to provide the TNRCC with the additional revenue needed to meet the needs of the program that monitors water systems. The amount charged to a water system as determined by the current fee schedule more accurately reflects the TNRCC's resource demands based on the size and the type of facility.

This fee was charged and collected by the Texas Department of Health from January 1, 1986 to March 1, 1992. If your system is being billed for the first time, either your system is a new public water system or your system has recently met the minimum size to be considered a public water system. New public water systems will not be assessed a fee for services until water is supplied to the first connection.

### **Can This Fee Be Prorated?**

No, this fee cannot be prorated.

### **When Are Public Water Systems Billed for This Fee?**

The billing statements for this fee are mailed in December of each year. The fee payment is due January 1 of the following year.

### **Who Is Responsible for the Payment of This Fee?**

The owner of the public drinking water system is the responsible party. If a system is being leased by the owner, the owner still is legally responsible for payment. The TNRCC can only suggest that the lessor (owner) and the lessee (renter) reach an agreement regarding which party will pay the fee.

### **Are There Penalties for Nonpayment of This Fee?**

Yes. There are interest and penalties for nonpayment of this fee. See the back of the invoice for details.

### **Why Must I Return the Coupon with My Payment?**

The payment coupon (the top portion of your bill) contains an optical character reader (OCR) line. When we receive your payment, a computer reads your account number from that OCR line. Without the original coupon, we must send your payment to another location for manual processing. That slows our processing of your payment and raises the

possibility that your payment may not be credited to the correct account.

### **I Have More than One Account; May I Send One Check for the Total Amount?**

You may send all your payments in one envelope, but please enclose a separate check for each coupon. If the number of checks does not equal the number of coupons, we will have to process your payment manually, and your accounts may not be credited correctly.

### **Where Should I Send My Payment?**

You should return your payment and the payment coupon in the envelope provided for your convenience. The mailing address is shown on the back of the coupon.

### **Where Should I Send Address Changes and Company Contact Information?**

You should send address changes and company contact information to the address shown below. Should you have technical questions about your water system, or need additional information about your water system, please contact the Public Drinking Water Section at (512) 239-6020. The technical staff of the Public Drinking Water Section can also assist you in calculating your fee.

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission  
Water Utilities Division  
Public Drinking Water Section, MC-155  
PO Box 13087  
Austin TX 78711-3087

### **Where Should I Send Information Regarding My Fee Account?**

If you wish to provide the TNRCC with information regarding only your account, please mail your correspondence to:

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission  
Financial Administration Division, MC-214  
PO Box 13087  
Austin TX 78711-3087

For your **account balance** or for information regarding other elements of this fee program, you may contact the Financial Administration Division at (512) 239-0343.

The TNRCC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. The agency does not allow discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or veteran status. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this document may be requested in alternate formats by contacting the TNRCC at (512)239-0010, Fax 239-0055, or 1-800-RELAY-TX (TDD), or by writing P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087.